CC 2015

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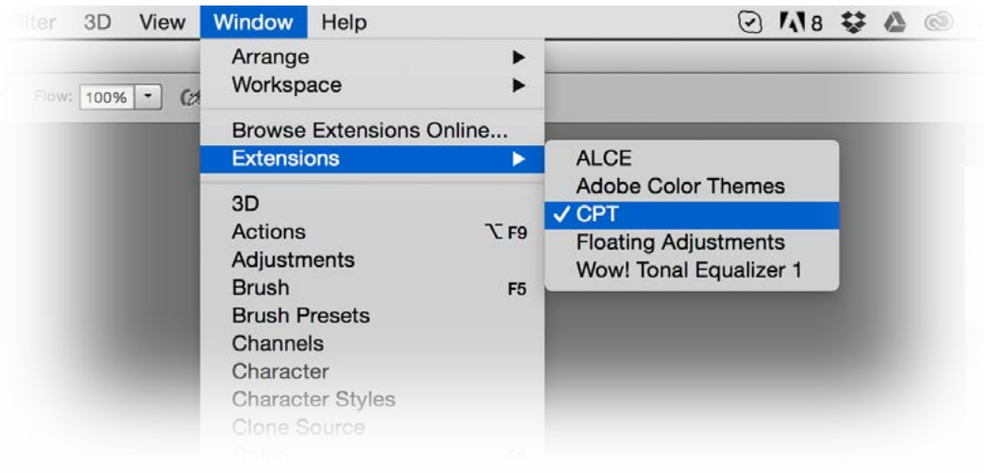
Channels Power Tool | Advanced Mask Editing

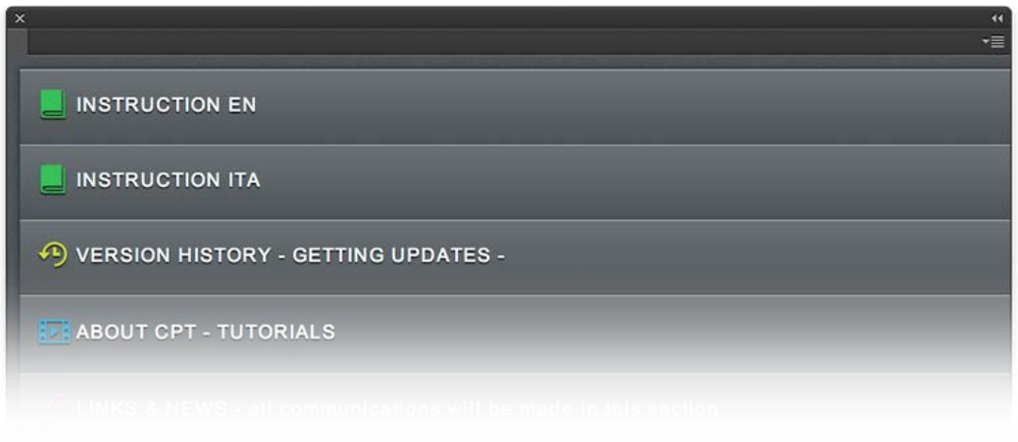
User Manual - Version 1.1.6 - October 2015

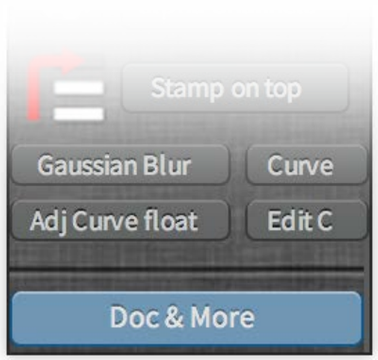
Welcome to Channels Power Tool

Once restarted Photoshop open Channels PowerTool from Photoshop/Window/Extensions.



Access to the Quick Manual from the Docs&More tab at the bottom of the panel.





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CPT Web Page >

Tutorials Page >

FAQ Page >

Channels Power Tool is developed by Giulana Abbiati. Visit her site >

or write to support@knowhowtransfer.com >

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Know-How Transfer – The Photography Knowledge Hub

A new platform by the same team who developed ALCE, formerly RBG Group or Bigano and associates.

Everyone dealing with photography and digital imaging will find a unique mix of instructional and how-to content here. We offer applications specifically designed by photographers for photographers, as well as effective tutorials and free resources. Our mission is to create a community, a Central Hub of Photography Knowledge, where photographers can exchange experiences, share information and grow their skills. Read more about our team here >

Many of them come from the school of the great Dan Margulis and still have a very special relationship with him.
I'm pleased to report here what he wrote about this group taken from his famous post "La Dolce Vita - An era ends":

*They say that Italians get emotional at times like this, and that Italians love beautiful things. I admit to feeling a bit Italian myself as I write this. I *have* developed an emotional attachment to the country, no doubt. And the relationships I have entered into with several of my students in that country have evolved into something, well, profoundly loving. The old joke has it that in heaven, all lovers are Italian. Right offhand I can think of a couple of exceptions to this generality, but there is no need to go off-topic. The truth is that it is a land of love and great beauty, made all the more beautiful professionally by seeing the new and sophisticated imaging algorithms being developed by Davide with Marco Olivotto, and by seeing how Alessandro, Daniele Di Stanio, Tiziano Fruet and others have brought first-class color instruction into a country where it was rarely found previously.*

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Channels Power Tool is an application developed by Giuliana Abbiati

1. Channels Power Tool Compatibility

Channels Power Tool works on CC2015, CC2014, CC, CS6 and CS5

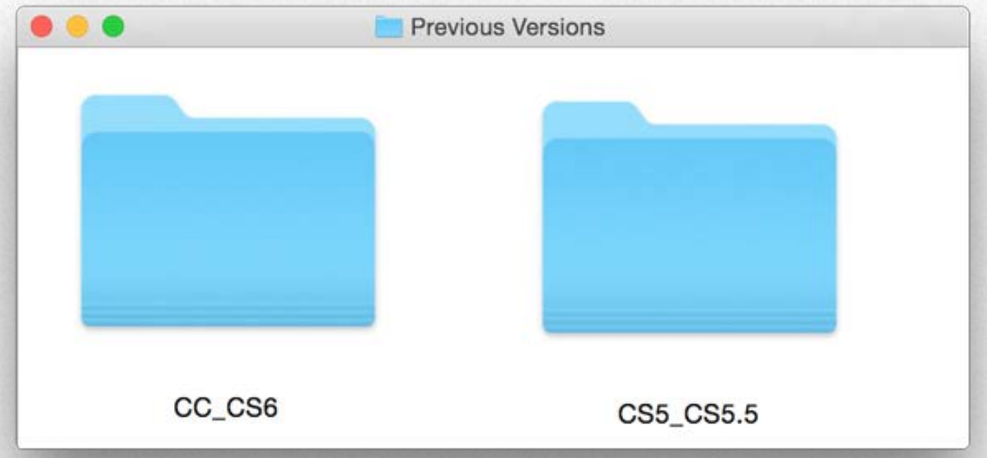
For further information visit the CPT page >
or write to
support@knowhowtransfer.com >

Copy and paste this link to email it to a different device
http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/download/manuals/cpt_manual_en.pdf

Problems? Go to the FAQ Page >

or write to support@knowhowtransfer.com >

2. Unzip the Downloaded Folder



This is what the downloaded folder contains
The install file valid for CC 2015 and CC 2014. A second folder for all other Photoshop Versions. A third folder with user manuals.

We do hope that this manual may support all your needs.
For further information visit the Channels Power Tool page >
or write to
support@knowhowtransfer.com

Copy and paste this link to email it to a different device
http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/download/manuals/cpt_manual_en.pdf

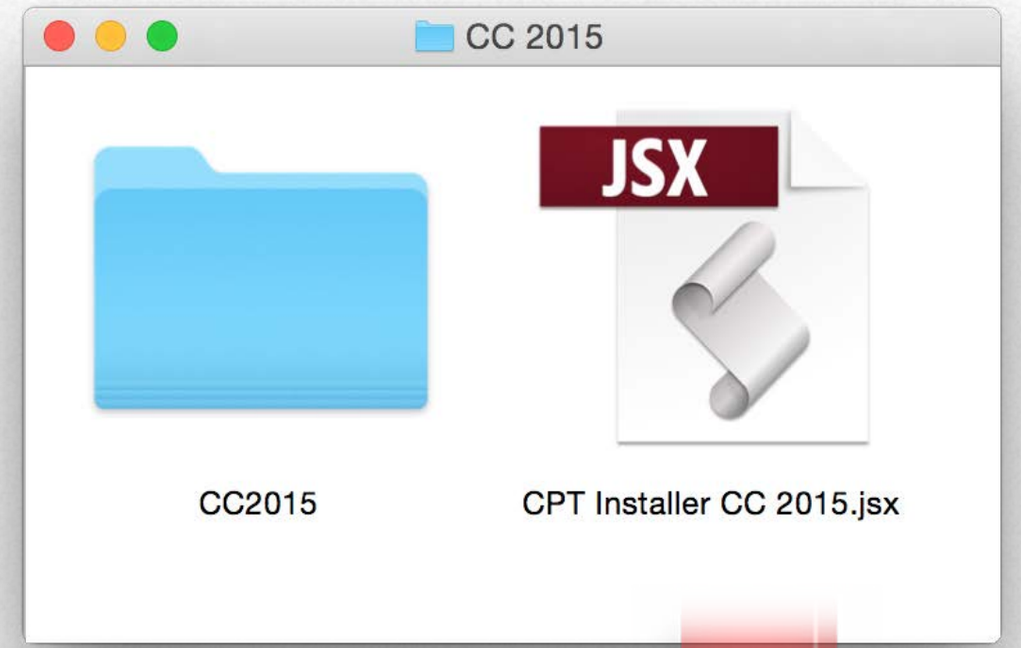
3a. Install on CC 2015 - MAC

1. Unzip the downloaded folder

2. To install use the CC 2015 folder

Please leave the installer file in his folder

3. Drag the file onto the Photoshop icon



4. Press the ‘ Install’ button

This window will open: Press “Install” to install CPT the first time.

In this case the “Unistall” button will be unactive.

5. Restart Photoshop

6. Open Channels Power Tool from Window/Extensions

Unistall previous CPT versions

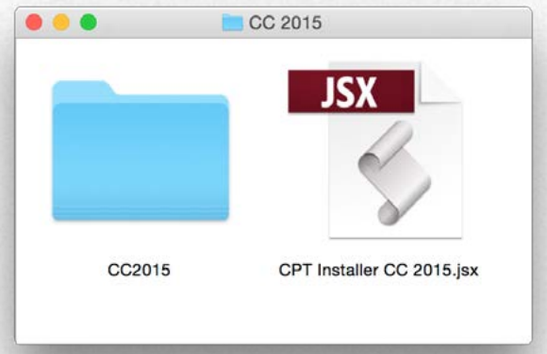
To uninstall previous versions use Adobe Extension Manager

Once installed, an help pdf containing all useful info will open (see page 2)

3b. Install on CC 2015 - WIN

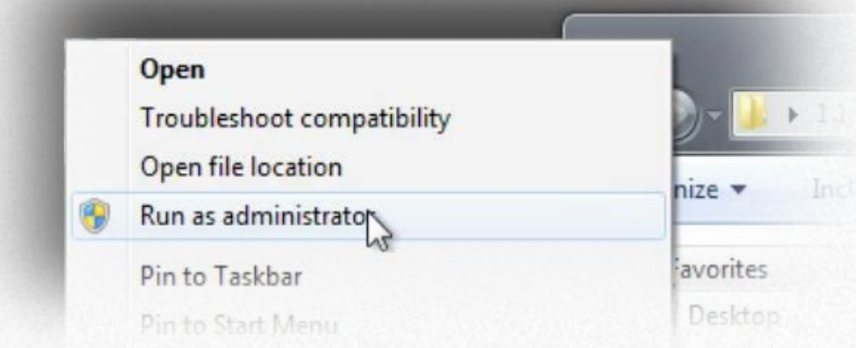
1. Unzip the Install Folder and copy its content on Desktop.

2. To install use the CC 2015 folder

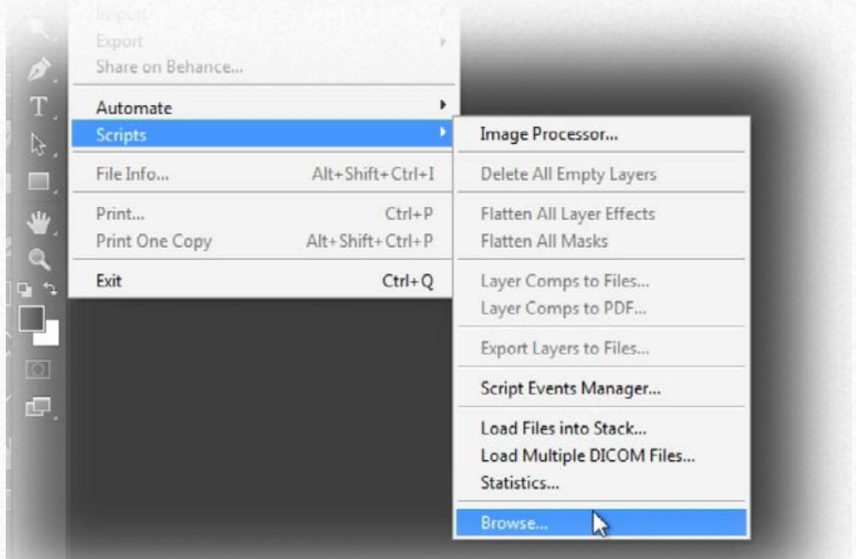


Please leave the installer file in his folder

3. Run Photoshop as an Administrator



4. From Filter -> Scripts -> Browse, open “CPTnstaller CC 2015.jsx



5. Press the ‘ Install’ button

This window will open: Press “Install” to install CPT the first time.

In this case the “Unistall” button will be unactive.

6. Restart Photoshop

7. Open Channels Power Tool from Window/Extensions

Unistall previous CPT versions

To uninstall previous versions use Adobe Extension Manager

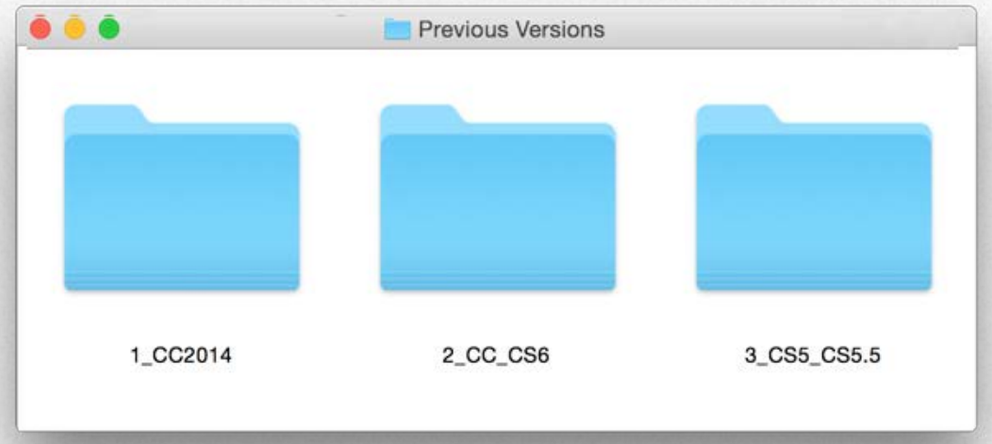
Once installed, an help pdf containing all useful info will open (same than page 2)

3c. Install on CC 2014, CC, CS6, CS5.5, CS5 - MAC

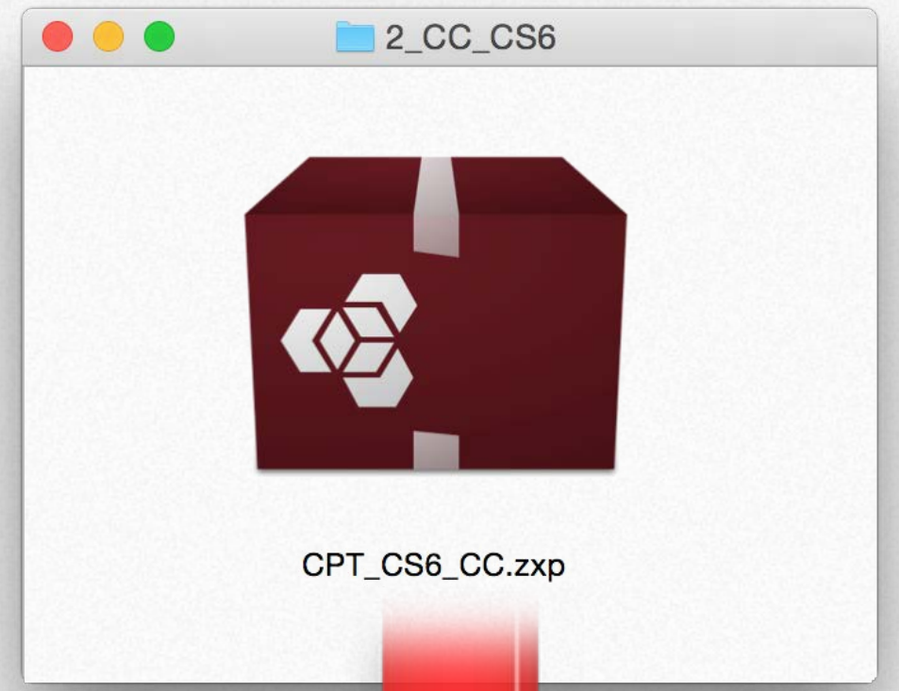
ADOBE EXTENSION MANAGER IS REQUIRED TO INSTALL

Each version of Photoshop requires his dedicated AEM version.

PS CC 2014 and CC need AEM CC, PS CS6 need AEM CS6 etc



Any version of Photoshop requires the dedicated CPT installer and Adobe Extension Manager Version



1. Drag the proper install file on the AEM icon on the dock

Or select the file and "0pen with" Adobe extension Manager

2. Accept the "Extension Disclaimer"

Now AEM will alert you that the "developer of the application" is unknown.

We know him. Dont worry,proceed and accept.

3. Install

AEM will alert you he reason why is that the verification system used by Adobe cause the expiration of the installed application. This means that without any apparent reason or notification your installed application will no longer work.

4. In case, remove the previous version of CPT

Simply press on the "Remove" button in the AEM window

5. Restart Photoshop

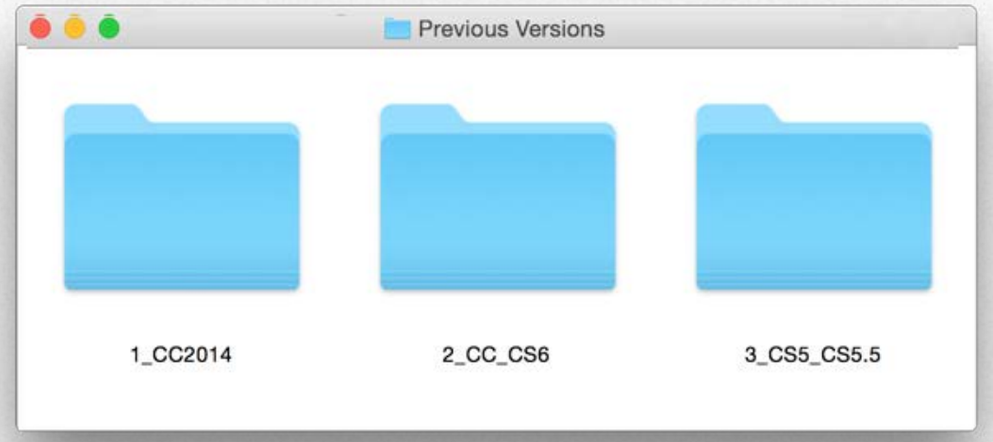
Open CPT from the Photoshop/Window/Exetensions menu.

3d. Install on CC 2014, CC, CS6, CS5.5, CS5 - WIN

ADOBE EXTENSION MANAGER IS REQUIRED TO INSTALL

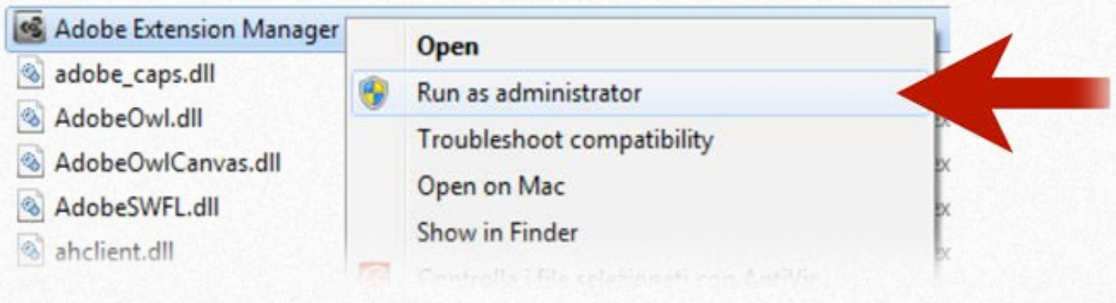
Each version of Photoshop requires his dedicated AEM version.

PS CC 2014 and CC need AEM CC, PS CS6 need AEM CS6 etc



1. Unzip the Install Folder and copy its content on Desktop.

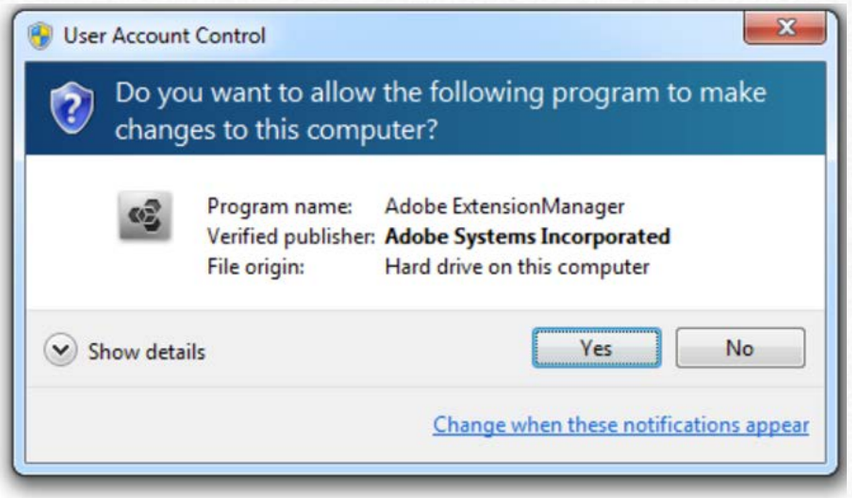
2. Run Adobe Extension Manager as an Administrator



3. Insert you admin password and open AEM

Enter your administrator password if requested: Do it even if you're already logged as Administrator!

Select the proper .zxp file and "0pen with" Adobe extension Manager.



4. Accept the "Extension Disclaimer"

Now AEM will alert you that the "developer of the application" is unknown. We know him. Dont worry; proceed and accept.

The reason of this alerts that the verification system used by Adobe cause the expiration of the installed application. This means that without any apparent reason or notification your installed application will no longer work.

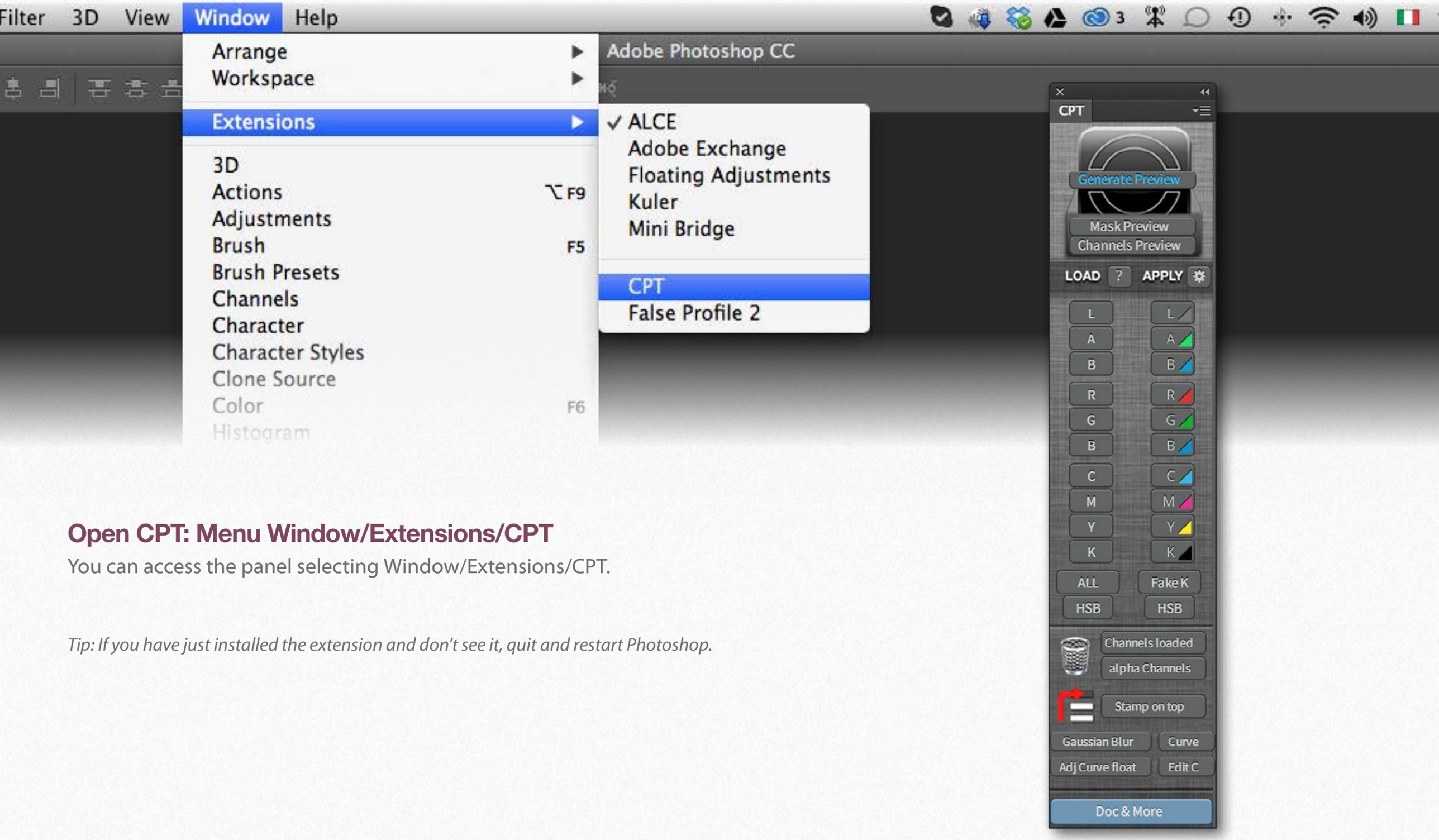
6. In case, remove the previous version of CPT

Simply press on the "Remove" button in the AEM window

7. Restart Photoshop

Open CPT from the Photoshop/Window/Exetensions menu.

4. Where to find CPT within Photoshop



Open CPT: Menu Window/Extensions/CPT

You can access the panel selecting Window/Extensions/CPT.

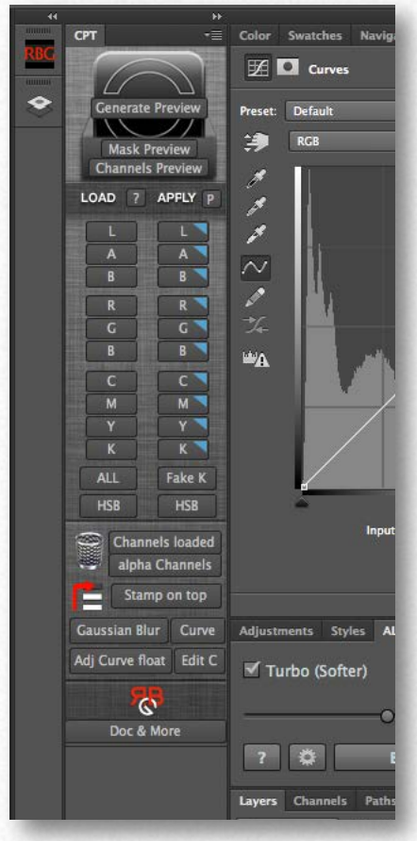
Tip: If you have just installed the extension and don't see it, quit and restart Photoshop.

5a. The Channels Power Tool Interface

The Channels Power Tool panel contains several buttons that let you work with RGB, Lab and CMYK channels of the image you're dealing with.

With Channels Power Tool you can:

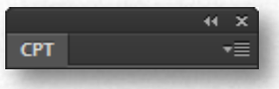
- Surf in a full screen **Live preview** between all the channels of the three main Photoshop color modes and apply the channel you choose
- Get a low-res **contact sheet** of RGB,Lab,CMYK channels of the file you're dealing with
- Load all Lab, RGB e CMYK channels, with just one click, in the same document or in a duplicate one
- Load a single channel as an alpha channel
- Apply and/or blend a channel in an existing layer, in a blank layer, in a layer mask or in one of the channels of the open document choosing different opacity and blending modes
- Use specific commands to speed up and improve your channels' workflow

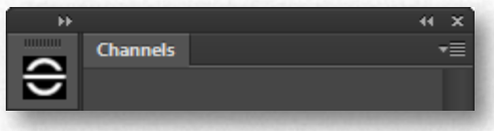


These features made CPT a flexible and useful tool to:

- **Evaluate** your image single channels at a glance
- Choose and craft your **workflow**
- Choose the most appropriate channel for a **mask**
- Improve and correct your image with **channel blending**
- **Automate** ,**speed up** and **optimiza** your workflow

As for any other Photoshop panel, Channels Power Tool can be dock and undock, moved into a group, made floating freely, resized, collapsed and expanded to icon view





Tip: most button in the APPLY column features a blue triangle in the top right corner.

This means the button can be personalized in different ways if you press the Alt key at the same time.

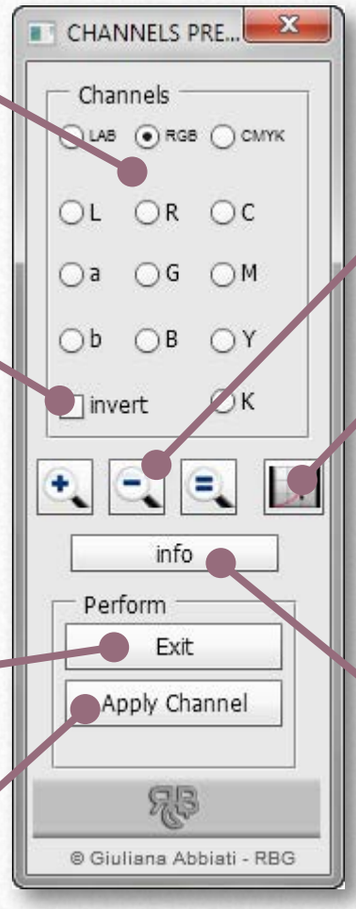
5b. Generate Preview

Generate Preview
makes a low-res channels preview (LAB, RGB, CMYK) maintaining image aspect ratio through conditional operations based on image size (Width ,High). Channels are showed as a Contact sheet in a separate file.
This file can be closed without the need to save it, anyway if you want to save this file just choose **File > Save As.**
You can also generate the preview running the script from: **File>Script>Channels Generate Preview**.

Tip: the fact you can evaluate at a glance all RGB, Lab e CMYK channels, allows you to immediately spot which channel to use in order to create a mask or a selection, which is the best candidate for a blending and, last but not least, see which channel need restoration in extreme cast images. All this on your fingertips without needing to duplicate your starting file and at an incredible speed!

5c. Channels Preview

Open your image in full screen mode and let you surf through RGB, Lab and CMYK channels for a better evaluation of which channel suits your needs. You can also apply a channel onto your active document.
You can open Channels Preview window also running the script from Photoshop menu:
File>Script>Channels Live Preview.



Channels
Navigate through the different channels checking the desired radiobutton.

Invert
Activate the checkbox to see the selected channel inverted.
It will automatically deselected when you select another channel.

Exit
Exit the preview and return to your image without any change.

Lens (three icons)
Let you set the zoom factor.

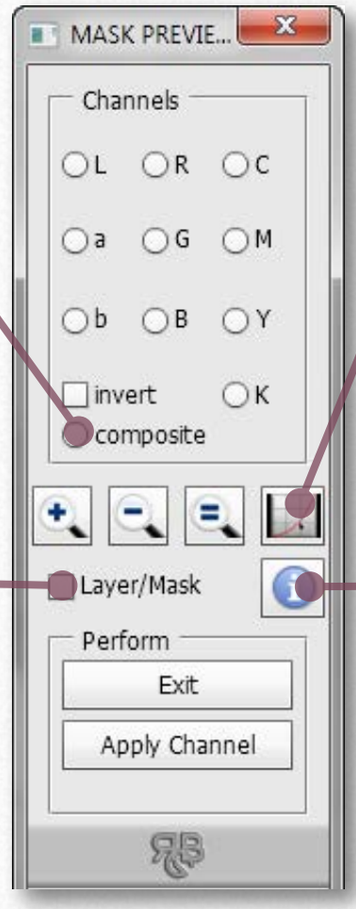
Curves
Open Curve window and let you see the effects on the image. You can craft your curve as any other curve, adding or subtracting points to it.

Info
Open and close the Info panel.

Apply Channel
Applies the selected channel as “Apply image” would do.
It will be applied on the layer, the layer mask or on the channel selected prior running the preview.
If the “invert” checkbox is active the channel will be applied inverted.

5d. Mask Preview

Select a layer mask before clicking on **Mask Preview,** then select one of the available channels.
You can now visualize one after the other the mask itself or the layer modified by the mask applied.
In each case you can modify your channel using **Curves** and see how this affect the final result.
This button, unlike **Channels Preview button**, shows more options to fine tune the work with layer masks.
Since all this process keeps all the original layers, even different opacities will be honored.
You can also recall **Mask Preview** from Photoshop menu **File > Script > Mask Live Preview**.



Composite

Applies the composite of the color mode of your actual image.

Layer/Mask

You can visualiza one after the other the layer with its mask applied or the layer mask itself.

Curves

You can see how the mask works on your layer while modified through **Curves**.

Info

Opens and closes **Info** panel.

5e. Load

LOAD (Alpha Channels)

It loads in the **Channels panel** the selected channel as an alpha one. You can load more times the same channels i.e. you modified it and you want the original one back to further possibilities.
ALL loads al the channels of all the color modes at the same time as alpha channels.

5f. Apply

APPLY (Apply image)

Applies the selected channel.

Prior clicking the button you have to choose where you want to apply the channel:

1. on an existing layer
2. on a new blank layer you created on purpouse
3. on a layer mask
4. on a channel

Be sure you selected one standard layer (not an adjustment layer), a layer mask or a channel before clicking the button, otherwise the process will be stopped.

(The same behaviour is found when you use Image>Apply image).

The channel will be applied without the Apply image options window to be shown (see Preferences section).

If the selected channel doesn't actually exist because your document works in a different color mode, CPT will generate it on the fly.

If the channel has been loaded before in your file by any of the tools of CPT panel (**LOAD** or **ALL** buttons), an **Options** window will appear. This way you can apply a channel that you have previously added (and maybe edited) or apply a new one reflecting the actual status of your image.

You have three choices:

Apply the existing channel: channel_name : the existing channel will be chosen for applying and loaded in the Apply image options window.

Create and Apply a new one: a new channel is generated and loaded in the Apply image options window.

Cancel: You return to your document without any change.

APPLY (Apply image) - optional keys

Bt deafult the channel is applied without opnening tha Apply image options window.

Tip: you can set a different behaviour and decide to always open the Apply image options window before applying your channel, as shown in the next page.

Option/Alt

By pressing the **Option/Alt** key while clicking on the desired button, the **Apply Image** options window will open letting you change the opacity and the blending mode before applying the channel.

Clic+Option/Alt= Opens Apply Image options window.

Shift

By pressing the **Shift** key you can access more options in the **Apply Image** window. You can indeed gain more control on the channel you are applying choosing from which layer you want to source from.

Clic+ Shift= Opens Apply Image options window and let you choose the layer you want to source from for the choosen channel.

If the document includes adjustment layers, that are not supported in the upcoming conversion, CPT will generate a merged layer above the actual layers stack.

5g. Preferences

P (Preferences)

Opens the preferences for the **APPLY** column buttons.

If checkbox **Always show 'Apply Image' Options Window** is selected, **Apply Image** options window will always appear, as default, everytime you click a button from the APPLY column.

If this checkbox is not selected (this is the default choice), the desired channel will be directly applied without any further option.

5h. Fake K

Fake K:

Applies a black channel generated with a choice of three different GCRs for color correction and masking purpouses.

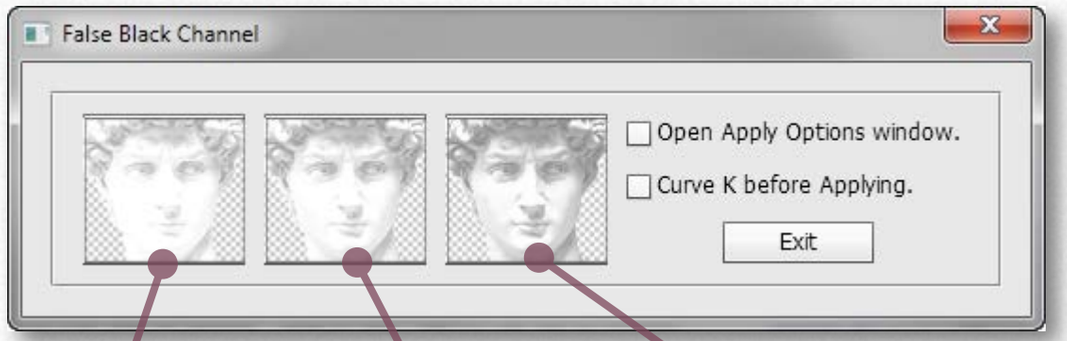
Open Apply Options window:

If selected it opens **Apply Image** before the channel is applied.

Curve K channel before applying:

If selected opens **Curves** window before the channel is applied.

If both checkboxes are selected, Curves appear first.



GCR light
Black Ink Limit: 70%
Total Ink Limit: 340%

GCR medium
Black Ink Limit: 70%
Total Ink Limit: 340%

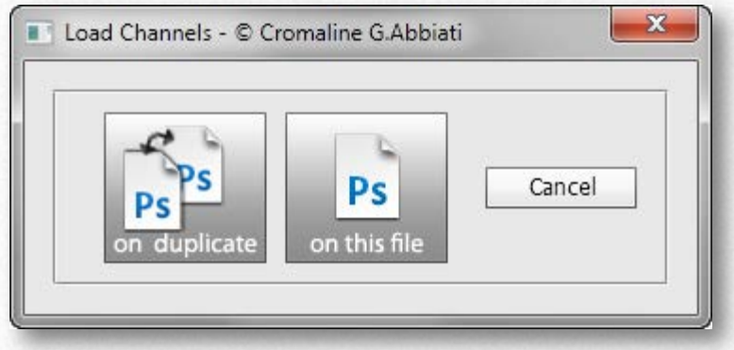
GCR heavy
Black Ink Limit: 70%
Total Ink Limit: 340%

Read more about GCR and how it can be useful to you >

5i. Extra Buttons

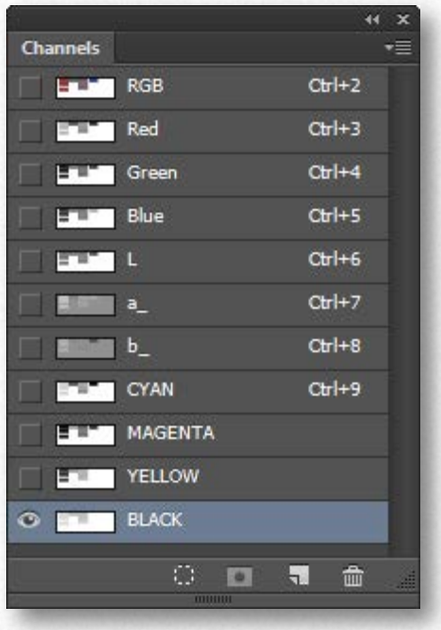
ALL - Load Channels on a duplicate

Loads Lab, RGB and CMYK channels in a dupicate file.
The script performs conditional operations based on the document color mode:
- if actual color mode is RGB it loads L, a, b, C, M, Y, K as alpha channels;
- if actual color mode is CMYK it loads R, G, B, L, a, b as alpha channels;
- if actual color mode is Lab it loads R, G, B, C, M, Y, K as alpha channels.



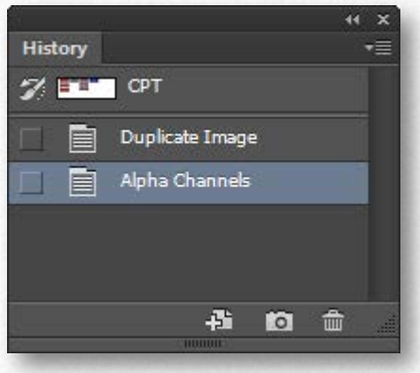
ALL - Load Channels on this file

Loads Lab, RGB and CMYK channels in the same document as alphas.
The script performs conditional operations based on the document color mode:
- if actual color mode is RGB it loads L, a, b, C, M, Y, K as alpha channels;
- if actual color mode is CMYK it loads R, G, B, L, a, b as alpha channels;
- if actual color mode is Lab it loads R, G, B, C, M, Y, K as alpha channels.



Undo

The process is registered as a single History state named “Alpha Channels“. You can undo with **Command/Ctrl + Option/Alt+ Z**



LOAD and APPLY HSB

These buttons generate HSB channels using Adobe optional plugin **Optional Multiplugin**. To be sure that it is installed properly, CPT installer set it automatically in Photoshop default plugin folder. To get more information about this plugin follow this link:
http://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/kb/plug-ins-photoshop-cs5.html

HSB - LOAD column

Loads HSB channles as alpha channels (Hue, Saturation, Brightness). These channels are generated starting from the RGB file.

HSB - APPLY column

Applies HSB channels (Hue, Saturation, Brightness).
These channels are generated starting from the RGB file.

Uninstall HSB plugin (Optional Multiplugin di Adobe)

You can permanently delete HSB plugin, installed along CPT, in this Photoshop folder **Plug-ins > File formats** deleting **HSB** folder. In order to be able to use again HSB buttons you need to reinstall CPT, that will reinstall the plugin.

Delete (bin icon) - Channels loaded

Delete only those alpha channelsthat have been created by **LOAD** and/or **ALL- Load Channels on this file** (this is an option of **ALL** button) from your active document.

Delete (bin icon) - alpha Channels

Delete all alpha channels, even those created outside CPT, from your active document.

Stamp on top (create a merged copy of visible layers on top of the actual stack)

Create a merged (composite) version of the file and place it on the top of the layer stack. Invisible layers are ignored and don't take part in the creation of the final result. Despite the behaviour of the default Photoshop shortcut **Command/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E** this button works fine even if you select a hidden layer, and always put the result on top of the oter layers.

Gaussian Blur

Recalls Photoshop **Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur**.

Curve

Recalls Photoshop **Image >Adjustments > Curves**. It is a destructive function, and can be applied only to a pixel-based layer, a layer mask or a channel.

Adj Curve float (adjust Curves adjustment layer)

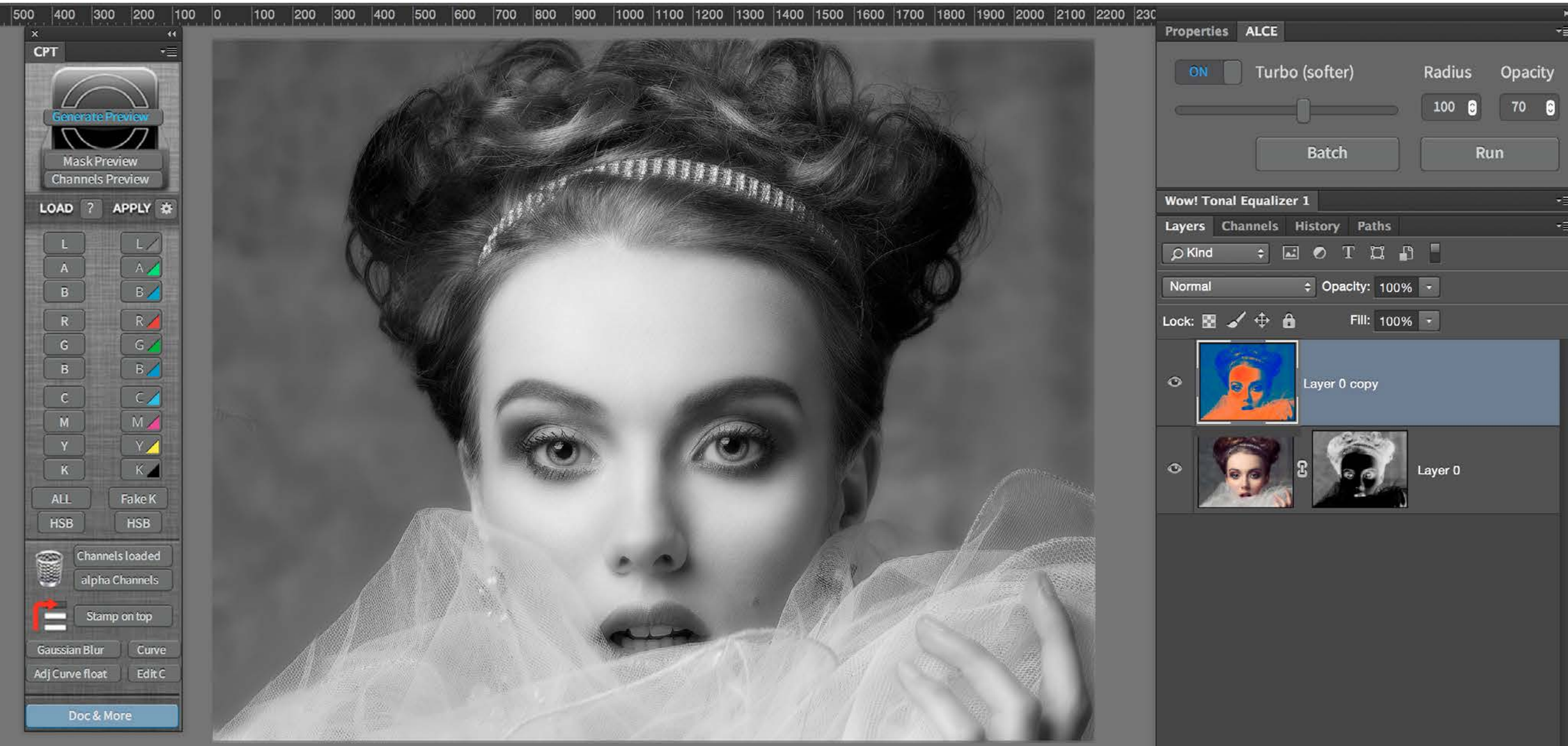
Creates a **Curves adjustment layer** (non-destructive) and opens **Curves floating window** for a better control.

Edit C (edit Curves adjustment layer)

Let you edit an existing **Curves adjustment layer**.

6. About Channels and Masks

Channels Power Tool is, as the name says, a very powerful tool. It allows us to work with Photoshop channels at unbelievable speed and with unseen control. To be honest, CPT doesn't introduce new functions compared to what Photoshop can already do by itself, but it takes a step ahed the usability of one of the most important ingredients of every image: the channels.
This preparatory section is aimed to introduce the characters we're working with on a daily basis (whether you know it or not) and some concepts that can be an ace in lots of situations.



What are Photoshop channels

Within Photoshop we can find several kind of channels, we will deal only with **color channels**, the ones that compose our image and are signature of a specific color mode (Grayscale, RGB, Lab, CMYK, HSB etc), and **alpha channels**, the channels we create usually with the purpouse of saving a selection, which itself is very volatile stuff and get lost, if everything goes well, when we close our file.

We can give a brief definition of a channel (every kind of) as "The representation of a selection in grayscale".

The keyword here is "representation". Everyone knows how useful a selection is, maybe what is not so clear is that Photoshop gives us several ways to visualize it (and therefore modify it). We are used to visualize a selection with the so called "marching ants" or maybe in **Quick mask** mode. But it is also possible to visualize a selection as a greyscale image, like every time we use a layer mask.

Channels works exactly in this way: they show with a different shade of grey if a given pixel is selected, and how much. In RGB a completely white pixel (when we look at a specific channel) means "this pixel is (totally) selected", while a pitch black pixel means "this pixel is (totally) not selected". Guess what a medium grey means? Let's try with an example: create a RGB file and manually paint the R (Red) channel completely white, then paint G (Green) and B (Blue) pitch black. How our file is gonna be? Exactly, pure red. The values of our channels will be R=255, G=0, B=0. Doing this we told Photoshop that we want that the red component of the file must be totally selected, while not Green nor Blue must take part in creating our composite image.

Let's take a more common example: a landscape with a blue sky in a bright sunny day. Try to visualize how channels will be in the sky area. Blue will be, for sure, the brightest channel, Red the darkest and Green would be somewhere in the middle. Learn how to take advantage of the inner selection hidden in every channel means we can obtain extremely complex selection, pixel precise and really with no effort.

At the very beginning it's hard to pre-visualize the structure of each channels and you need to check them one by one toggling the visibility in the Channels panel. Here it comes CPT, that let's you, with literally just one click, see the structure of each channel at a glance. Not only in RGB or the color mode you are using, but in all three main Photoshop color modes (RGB, Lab and CMYK) at the same time.

Apply Image

Image>Apply image is one of the older Photoshop functions and let's us to do copy-paste of channels or layers (our source) on channels, layers or layer masks (our destination). You can change the opacity of the source you're applying, its blending mode or you can also mask it choosing a channel. The **Apply** button of Channels Power Tool summon this function that, for unknown reason, doesn't have a default shortcut. **Apply image** works also between different files, and in the likely case the file has multiple layers (the most common situation), it permits to choose which layer should be the source, discarding the others layers. The only condition **Apply image** requires to be used between different files is that these must be opened at the same time in Photoshop and share exactly the same size (in pixel) of width and height.

What is GCR and how it can be useful to you

GCR means **Grey Component Replacement**. This concept works for CMYK color mode, where we can obtain the same color in different ways using different values combinations for the four primaries. Everything became clear if we consider a color composed by different elements, generically speaking luminosity, tint and saturation. Luminosity is the equivalent of the grey strenght of a color: how much dark or bright we perceive this color. We can have two colors with the same tint and saturation (i.e. a certain red) but different luminosity. Let's call them a dark red and a bright red for ease sake. What distinguish them is the luminosity. In CMYK we have the theoretical possibility to obtain a grey in two distinct ways: blending proper quantities of CMY or using just the K. This can take to a lot of issues in we are going to print in offset, but in our ipothetic example let's imagine things work in a perfect, mathematical way. Let's say we want to obtain a medium grey. In RGB we would only have R=128 G=128 B=128. In CMYK (considering a Coated FOGRA39 profile) we can reach this result in (at least) two different ways: with just a K=50, meaning we have C=0 M=0 Y=0 K=50, or leaving K=0 and using only CMY components like this: C=58 M=48 Y=47 K=0. Now we got lots of different possible combinations, adding a little K and subtracting CMY in a right proportion. This is exactly GCR: how we transform our grey component when converting to CMYK. A low GCR will use a lot of CMY and small K (K will be lighter), a high GCR awill use a lot of K and less CMY (K will be darker) while a medium GCR will be something in the middle. This explanation leaves a lot of dark areas in explaining this concept, but nonetheless let us understand how a custom GCR could be useful: to obtain a K darker or lighter, that we can use as a mask, a selection or anything we could think about.

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7. FAQ

For any question about purchasing, installing and trouble shooting please visit our dedicated FAQ page at the following address:

http://www.knowhowtransfer.com/ctp/faq

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8. Links and Credits

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Channels Power Tool is developed by Giuliana Abbiati
This manual is designed by Marco Diodato

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9. A brief presentation of our Apps for Photoshop.

Wow! Tonal Equalizer - Frequency Separtion Plugin

Boost and soft an image in one step detail scales through five dedicated sliders. Positive values, which add detail or shape. Negative value remove detail and create great, soft transitions.

PS CC 2015, CC2014, CC , CS6 - MAC & WIN. Buy €32 >

Channels Power Tool - Advanced Mask Editing

Easily get a preview of all available channels. Create masks from the channels. Use the powerful Apply Image option to precisely recover the details of your files. CPT will enhance your color control precision and productivity. PS CC 2015, CC2014, CC , CS6, CS5 - MAC & WIN. Buy €20 >

VitaminBW - Single and Triple Tone Black&White Converter

An original approach to B&W Conversion with a very clean and simple interface. Simply press the "Single Tone" or the "Triple Tone" button to be quickly introduced to advanced conversion techniques.

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Double USM - Two Channels Advanced Sharpening

Works separately on Dark and Light halo's components of an image. With a double set of sliders and his high quality preview, Double USM fills the gap. For traditional, HiRaLoam or creative mixed sharpening.

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ALCE - Advanced Local Contrast Enhancer

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PS Projects - Files Manager for Photoshop

A script that lets you create, load and modify Project files – i.e. collections of images in any format, from any folder in your hard drive as file references, that you might need to open in Photoshop often.

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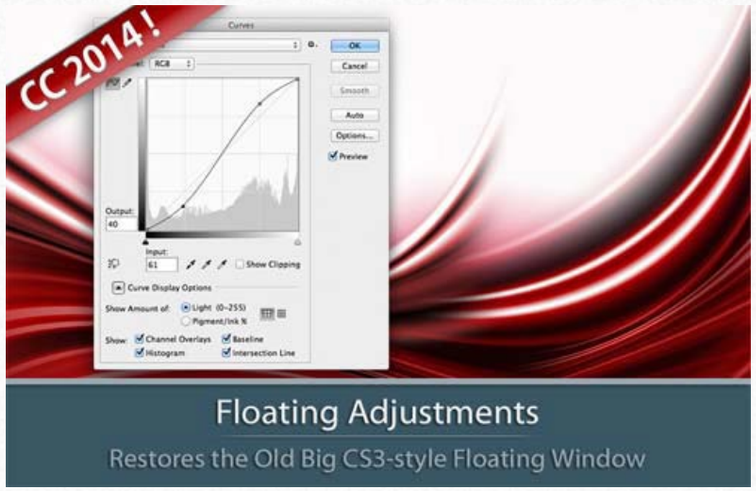
Freeware



Floating Adjustments - Restores the old CS3 floating window

Restores the Adjustment Layers' bigger, floating windows look and behaviour which was the norm back in CS3. It allows the creation of 10 Adjustment kinds as big, floating windows, and the modifications of existing adj.

PS CC2014, CC , CS6, CS5 - MAC & WIN.

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False Profile - Tonal range control with low or high gamma

A Photoshop extension to automate the assignment of false RGB profiles for a full control of the luminosity. Brings new features and refinements to the process of assigning false profiles. Works in conjunction with the Dan Margulis' PPW Tools.

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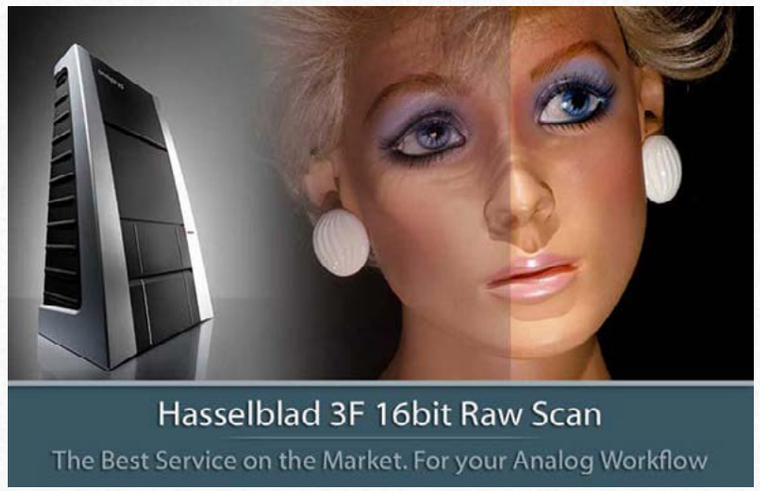

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